

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-10

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FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0341

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EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, MARR, KS

SUBJECT: ROK PRESS CONTINUES FOCUS ON NORTH KOREAN THREAT

REF: SEOUL 3670

1. ROK PRESS MAY 28 AND 29 GAVE PROMINENT COVERAGE TO MAY 27 OBERDORFER ARTICLE REPORTING THAT NORTH KOREANS ARE MASSING NORTH OF DMZ. STORIES UNDER HEADLINES READING "SEOUL WITHIN MISSILE RANGE" EMPHASIZED REPORTED PLACEMENT OF FROG MISSILES ALONG DMZ, AS WELL AS CONSTRUCTION OF AIRFIELDS THAT PUT MIG-21'S WITHIN FOUR MINUTES OF SEOUL. STORIES ALSO REPORT OBERDORFER'S COMMENT THAT NORTH KOREAN NAVAL BUILDUP THREATENS NORTHWEST ISLANDS.

2. OBERDORFER ARTICLE COMPLEMENTED WIRE SERVICE REPORTS THAT UN DIPLOMATIC SOURCES HAD SAID PRC MIGHT HAVE ENDORSED A NORTH KOREAN ATTACK AGAINST THE ROK. OTHER ARTICLES APPEARING IN CONNECTION WITH KIM IL-SUNG TRAVEL CITED ROKG SOURCES AS SAYING TRIP WAS PART OF FALSE PEACE OFFENSIVE DESIGNED TO COVER INTENTION TO ATTACK ROK.

3. AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND OF STORIES ON NORTH  
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KOREAN THREAT, PRESS CONTINUED EDITORIAL DISCUSSION OF RELIABILITY OF US COMMITMENT IN CASE OF NORTH KOREAN ATTACK (REFTEL). TONGA ILBO MAY 28 SAID THERE NO GUARANTEE THAT US WILL NOT MOVE DEFENSE LIND BACK

TO MARIANAS. CAUTIONING THAT "WE CANNOT EXCLUDE POSSIBILITY THAT US MAY NOT INTERVENE EVEN IF ROK INVADED BECAUSE OF CHANGING SITUATION IN AMERICA," TONGA SAID ROK SHOULD BUILD STRONG SELF-RELIANT POWER SO NORTH WON'T BE TEMPTED TO ATTACK. SEMI-OFFICIAL KYONGHYANG SHINMUN WAS MORE OPTIMISTIC, FINDING IT ENCOURAGING THAT US CONGRESS, PRESS AND SCHOLARS HAVE SUPPORT US COMMITMENT AND "PARTICULARLY REMARKABLE" THAT SENATOR MANSFIELD DID SO. PAPER SAID THAT IT HOPED PRESIDENT FORD'S EUROPEAN TOUR WOULD SERVE TO DISCOURAGE KIM IL-SUNG.

4. EARLIER, MAY 23 EDITORIAL IN GOVERNMENT SEOUL SHINMUN ELABORATED ON REFTEL CALLS FOR REVISION OF ROK-US DEFENSE TREATY BY STATING THAT A PROMISE OF "LASTING STATIONING OF US TROOPS" AND "IMMEDIATE INTERVENTION IN EVENT OF ATTACK" SHOULD BE INCORPORATED INTO TREATY. PAPER NOTED THAT ARTICLES FOUR AND THREE CURRENTLY MAKE TROOP STATIONING A US RIGHT, NOT OBLIGATION, AND STIPULATE THAT RESPONSE TO ATTACK BE IN ACCORDANCE WITH CONSTITUTIONAL PROCEDURES. IT SAID "OUR SENSE OF INSECURITY CANNOT BE REMOVED WITHOUT REVISING THESE CLAUSES."  
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